

“I think the reason we sometimes have the false sense that God is so far away is because that is where we have put him. We have kept him at a distance, and then when we are in need and call on him in prayer, we wonder where he is. He is exactly where we left him.” [Ravi Zacharias](#)

Loving, and truly ever present God, we thank you that you are ever near to us. That you are as close as a whisper in our ear, a thought that enters our mind, a quiet look inside ourselves. Forgive us when we think you are far away, when we put you far away – perhaps because when we are ashamed, and we would just as soon hide our thoughts and actions. Or because we think you only care about the big things in our lives, and we don’t trust that you care about the daily things, even the little things in our lives. You know all, Lord. Help us to remember the words of the Psalmist, “Lord, you have searched my heart and you know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts. You search out my path, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.” And, sometimes, Lord, this can seem disarming, to know that nothing is hidden from you. And yet it is also a relief, O God. Because we know that we can be completely who we are before you. With all our strengths and capabilities, as well as our failings and faults. With you, we don’t have to put up any pretenses, we can be who we are and know that we are loved. We are accepted, we are understood. But also, Lord, we are challenged to be better. To be stronger, to live rightly, to not worry, to be less critical, to be more patient, to care more, to strive for excellence. We are challenged to exemplify those fruits of your Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, goodness. And we ask that when we leave this place today, that we will continue to seek your presence in our decisions and our actions, that we will listen to you, and be guided by you, in the way we live our lives. For we trust, as the Psalmist also says, “Happy are those who walk in the way of the Lord, who seek him with their whole heart.” May we seek you with our whole heart.

We come to you in prayer to express our joys, our hopes, our concerns. Thank you for the beauty and sun and calm of this day, especially after a week where the forces of your creation reminded us once again that there are things we cannot control. And there are things we take for granted. But we thank you that you are the one constant we can count on. And Lord, there are those who are struggling today and need your healing, your comfort, your direction, your peace. You have heard those on our prayer list, but there are others.

And now, Lord, as we prepare to enter the Mission Field outside these walls, we pray to be the church you want us to be, as we pray together our John Wesley Prayer:

Dear Lord, we want John Wesley to be a strong and vital church in our community. And we want to be guided by your vision and plan for us. As we move into the future, please lead us all in our thoughts, our discussions, and our decisions. Show us what you would have us do and how you would have us do it. And help us always remember that John Wesley is your church, not ours – may your will be done. In Christ's name we pray. Amen

